



Waller Creek Tunnel now slated to be finished this spring



By [Angie Beavin](#)

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AUSTIN (KXAN) — The 1.5-mile Waller Creek Tunnel being built to stop flooding in the city's core could now be done as early as March.

"I've actually seen [the creek] crest completely up to here," said Dawn Hobbs, pointing to the patio of the restaurant where she works right along the creek.

The tunnel will take 28 acres of land out of a floodplain. Planners had

hoped to have it complete by the end of 2014, but Mother Nature and some construction setbacks halted the project.

In May, construction was held up at Waterloo Park where the tunnel intake will be. The intake building [violated the Capitol View Corridor](#). The project plans called for a 32-foot intake building, but that is 16 feet too high, according to state law. In 1983, lawmakers passed a law stopping any buildings from obstructing the view along the Capitol Corridor.

City officials say the tunnel should now be finished between March and June.

On Wednesday, Austin Mayor Steve Adler introduced a new CEO of The Waller Creek Conservancy, the group partnering with the city to develop the land.

“Peter [Mullan] has the vision and skills to bring the Waller Creek Project to fruition,” Adler said.

The latest plans feature a chain of five parks, stretching from Waterloo Park to Lady Bird Lake.

While waiting for completion of the tunnel, Mullan says there’s no set timeline for the parkland development.

“We don’t yet know exactly what Waller Creek will become. We don’t yet know exactly what it will look like or the effect it will have,” Mullan said. “People are eager to get going and get started, so I think 2015 is going to be a big year for us.”

He says the project will keep growing and developing over the years and decades.

Hobbs says those changes can’t come soon enough.

“I think it could really help everything around here,” Hobbs said. “We’re excited about it definitely.”

The tunnel construction project cost approximately \$150 million. A capital plan for the park development from the Waller Creek Conservancy is “coming soon,” Mullan says.

As far as the re-do on the intake building for the tunnel, city officials say the original engineering firms are redesigning the intake facility at no cost to the city. Negotiations are still ongoing as to exactly who will have to pay for the mistake.

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